

SCOPING NOTICE

Fire Management Plan Environmental Assessment

National Park Service - Grand Teton National Park

March 2003



SCOPING NOTICE

*The National Park Service is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to address a new Fire Management Plan being prepared for Grand Teton National Park and John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway in Wyoming. You are invited to attend a **Public Scoping Open House** being held on **April 24, 2003** from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Jackson Hole Middle School in Jackson, Wyoming.*

The public is encouraged to attend at any time during the three-hour open house session. No presentations are scheduled. Instead, the open house format is intended to promote more informal interaction with exhibits and provide opportunities to make written and verbal comments. Park staff will be available to provide information and answer questions.

BACKGROUND

The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) in support of an updated Fire Management Plan. This comprehensive plan will cover all vegetation communities found in Grand Teton National Park (GTNP) and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway (JODR) in Wyoming. The EA is needed in order to evaluate potential impacts to the natural and cultural environment from proposed fire management activities. The NPS is soliciting comments from the public to help identify issues and develop alternative fire management approaches that will be evaluated in the EA.

The policy of Grand Teton National Park is to (1) allow fire to achieve its natural role to the largest degree possible in both GTNP and JODR; (2) use fire to accomplish desired resource management objectives where appropriate; (3) protect life, property and resources from unwanted fire; and (4) avoid unacceptable effects of fire and fire suppression.

Desired future conditions are both resource-based and risk-based. Resource-based future conditions, addressing both vegetation and habitat, require using natural processes as much as possible while maintaining other fire program and park management goals. The goal is to maintain succession and diversity of the vegetation whenever possible,



depending on historical use. Risk-based future conditions include life and safety considerations, structure protection, and designated response zones. This includes mitigation to reduce fire behavior as well as costs and risks to life and property while maintaining other fire program and park unit management goals.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The **purpose** of the Fire Management Plan is to provide direction and establish specific procedures for all fire program activities within Grand Teton National Park and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway. The fire management program, carefully guided by resource management goals, will protect and perpetuate natural and cultural resources and their associated natural processes. The **need** is to counter the effects of past fire exclusion and reintroduce fire to fire-dependent ecosystems, while protecting life and property. Furthermore, a need exists to manage fire on an ecosystem level, integrating the park with



adjacent lands and the plans, resources, and risks associated with other jurisdictions (private, state, county, national forest, refuge, BLM, Yellowstone NP) in the Greater Yellowstone Area.

PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES

The park held two internal scoping meetings with representation from local, state and federal levels. Preliminary alternatives were formulated considering different treatment mixes within the fire management zones. After additional consideration of the purpose, need, goals, objectives and desired future conditions of a new fire management plan, the following three preliminary alternatives are proposed:

- ❑ **No Action - Suppression, Wildland Fire Use, and Prescribed Fire** This alternative excludes the fuels management plan. It includes very minimal mechanical treatment and pile burning. Response zones and actions within these zones will stay the same as currently identified.
- ❑ **Alternative A - Suppression, Wildland Fire Use, Prescribed Fire, Mechanical Treatment** This is the same as a no action alternative except response zones will be modified in some areas and will include the full range of actions within each zone. Wildland fire use may be a management option for any fire if mitigation measures have been taken. Mechanical treatment will also be included within the fire management plan.
- ❑ **Alternative B - Suppression, Wildland Fire Use, Mechanical Treatment** This alternative allows for revisions to the current fire management plan including zones, strategies, incorporating the fuels management plan and deleting prescribed fire. Prescribed fire as a management tool will not be considered in this option.

PRELIMINARY RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

Resource considerations identified to date include:

- ◆ Air Quality and Visibility
- ◆ Cultural Resources
- ◆ Geology and Soils
- ◆ Water Quality
- ◆ Public & Employee Safety
- ◆ T&E Species
- ◆ Vegetation
- ◆ Viewshed (smoke & after burn treatment)
- ◆ Visitor Experience
- ◆ Wetlands
- ◆ Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

NEPA PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The overall planning process is anticipated to extend over a period of approximately 12 months. Project milestones include:

❖ Project Initiation:	Jan 2003
❖ Public Scoping:	Apr 2003
❖ Analysis & Consultation:	July 2003
❖ Plan/EA Preparation:	Sep 2003
❖ Public Review of EA:	Oct 2003
❖ Final FMP & Decision:	Dec 2003

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

We want your comments! Anyone interested in this planning effort is encouraged to visit the park web page at <http://www.nps.gov/grte/plans/planning.htm> which will contain information on current project activities. Comments can be emailed to **GRTE_Planning@nps.gov**, or you may return the attached comment form to:

National Park Service
Grand Teton National Park
P.O. Drawer 170
Moose, Wyoming 83012
Attn: Planning Office

WHAT'S NEXT?

Once we have received and reviewed the scoping comments, we will begin further developing the alternatives. The next step will be writing the Fire Management Plan/EA, available for review early next winter.

Thank you for your interest in Grand Teton National Park and your participation in the development of the Fire Management EA.



**Scoping Comment Form
Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming
Fire Management Plan Environmental Assessment**

Please respond to the following questions and **return this form by May 4, 2003**. You may attach additional pages if needed. Also, include your name, mailing address and email address (if applicable) in the space provided below. Thank you again for your interest in Grand Teton National Park's Fire Management Program.

Please be aware that names and addresses of respondents may be released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act. Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There also may be circumstances in which we would withhold from the record a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comments. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

What issues would you like to see addressed?

What alternatives or alternative fire management strategies would you like to see addressed?

Do you have additional information, concerns, or other comments about the proposal?

☐ Please check the box if you would like to remain on the mailing list to receive additional information concerning this proposal.

Name: _____ E-Mail: _____

Street/Box #: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

